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FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4902  
INFO RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 5035  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 0012  
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY 0071

UNCLAS WELLINGTON 000824

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STATE FOR EAP/ANP AND WHA

E.O. 12958: N/A  
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SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND VIEWS ON DEMOCRACY IN VENEZUELA

REF: STATE 157206

1. (SBU) On November 20, Pol/Econ Counselor met with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) Deputy Director of the Americas Division, Paul Willis, to discuss the issues regarding Venezuela and upcoming developments related to the country's constitution. While recognizing that Venezuela does not have diplomatic representation in New Zealand (Venezuela's Embassy in Canberra also covers New Zealand), Pol/Econ Counselor noted USG concerns regarding the future of democracy in Venezuela. Willis agreed that the situation in Venezuela bore watching. New Zealand exports milk products to Venezuela, and their bilateral relationship is primarily centered on the dairy trade, with Mexico and Cuba being other major importers of New Zealand milk products. Willis said that the GNZ's primary focus on Venezuela's foreign policy in the region is focused on Venezuela's potential influence on Pacific Island countries, noting that Venezuela had been an observer during the recent Pacific Islands Forum (PIF).

2. (SBU) Willis said that his office would welcome further opportunities to exchange information on Venezuela with the Embassy.  
McCormick